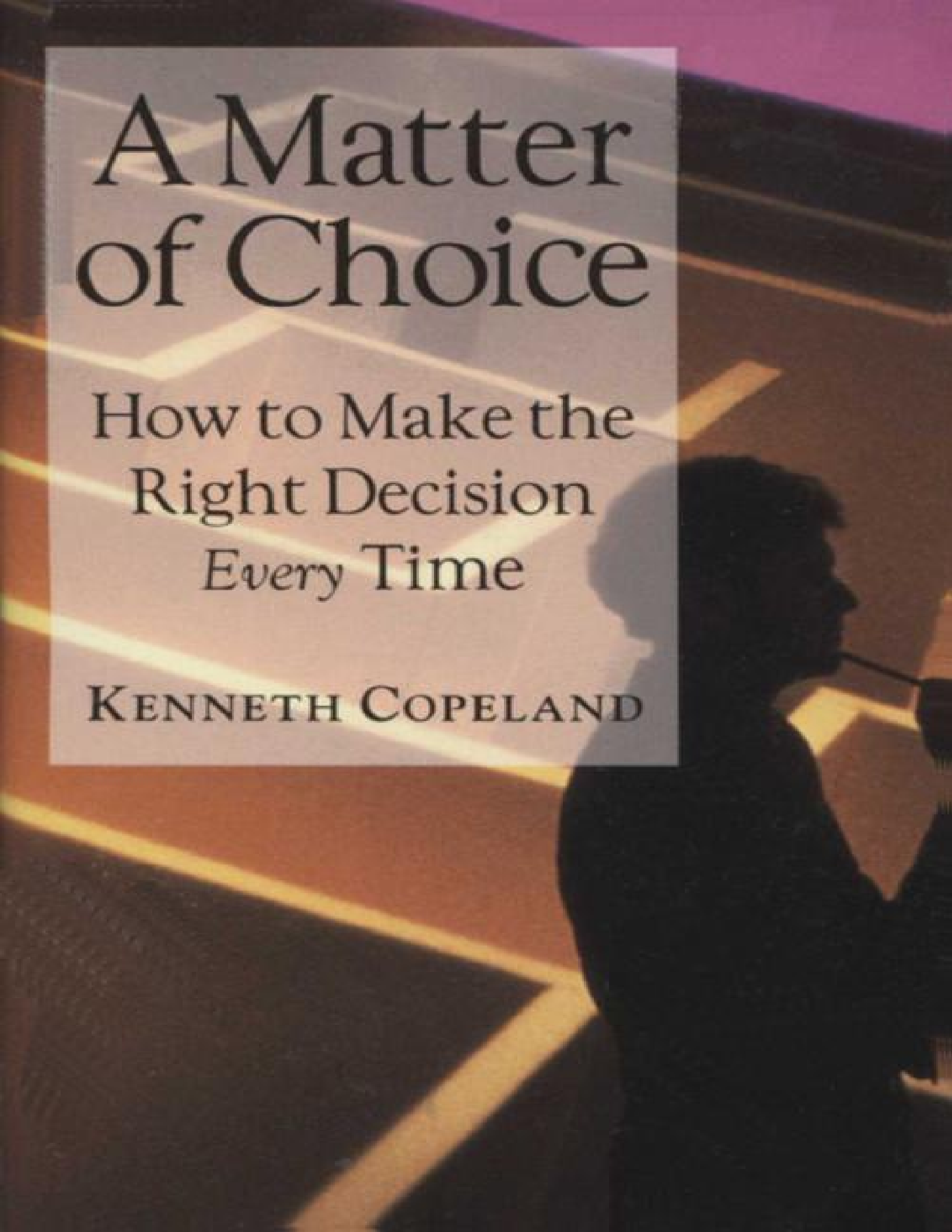

A Matter of Choice
How to Make the Right Decision Every Time
KENNETH COPELAND

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How to Make the Right Decision *Every* Time

A Matter of Choice

"It doesn't matter how hard I try, everything I do turns out wrong!"

Have you ever felt that way? I certainly have.

There was a time in my life when everything I put my hand to fell apart. Back then, I chalked it up to "bad luck."

But I was wrong.

I've found out in the 25 years since then, there's no such thing as luck—good or bad. In fact, I've taken the term completely out of my vocabulary.

It's not luck that determines how things turn out in our lives—it's choices. When we make good ones, things go well for us. When we make bad ones, things go wrong.

No doubt, some folks would dispute that.

They'd tell me about times when they did everything right. Times when they gathered all the information, listened to the experts and made a wise choice that, due to circumstances beyond their control, got them in trouble.

But the truth is, not matter how "right" you think you were at the time, a decision that brings trouble is a poor decision.

"Oh, but Brother Copeland, there's no way in the world I could have known in advance what would happen in that situation!"

No, there may not have been any way in this natural world you could have made a better choice.

But, if you're a born-again believer, you aren't restricted to making choices according to this natural world. You have another, far more powerful option.

Don't Just Bail—Believe!

Look at Mark 4 and you'll see what I mean.

There, we find Jesus' disciples facing a problem that required them to take some kind of action. But they chose the wrong action—and it landed them in deep water.

Here's the situation. Jesus had been preaching all day at the seaside. At the end of the day, he had 6

instructed the disciples to take him by boat to the other side of the sea.

And when they [the disciples] had sent away the multitude, they took him [Jesus] even as he was in the ship....

And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (Mark 4:36-41).

Now, think about this situation for a moment.

There were the disciples, facing this fierce storm.

No doubt they were doing everything they knew to do, naturally speaking, to keep their boat afloat.

They were bailing, they were paddling.

But they didn't say a word to Jesus, even though He was right there in the

boat with them!

They didn't call on his power until the boat was full of water and they were about to sink.

Why? They'd made the wrong choice. They had chosen to look to natural solutions instead of supernatural ones. Faith never even entered their minds until they were about to drown!

It should have. After all, Jesus had been teaching them the Word all day. He'd told them how the devil comes to choke the Word with pressures and cares of the world. Then he got into the boat and said, "Now we will go to the other side" and went to sleep expecting His Word to be carried out.

If they'd really listened to the Word Jesus had taught, any one of those disciples could have—and should have—stood up in the bow of that boat and hollered, "Peace be still! The Son of the living God has told us to go to the other side of this lake and we are going if we have to walk!"

If they'd thought supernaturally, instead of just naturally, any one of them could have drawn by faith on the anointing and the words of Jesus and stopped that storm. But they made the wrong choice.

Many well-meaning believers are making that same mistake today. They have Jesus right there in their boat, but they're depending on natural resources to get them through their lives instead of calling on the supernatural anointing of God.

They're making the wrong choices, so they're going under.

A Supernatural Mind

Actually, it never even occurred to the disciples to take the supernatural way out of that situation. It never entered their minds to stand up and speak to that storm. The reason is simple. They didn't think like Jesus thought.

He thought like Someone Who had access at all times to the power of God Himself, which is superior to all the forces of the natural world.

(That's why it's called supernatural.) The disciples thought like people who are subject to those natural forces.

That's why they *"feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

Instead of jumping up and saying, "Hey, that's the way I want to be!"—they just thought Jesus was strange. People still think that about God.

They say things like, "You never know what God will do. He moves in mysterious ways."

That used to be true until the Holy Spirit came to teach us all things. (See John 16:13.) Now we're not meant to look at God as some strange, mysterious being anymore. We're to know Him and imitate Him as dearly beloved children (Ephesians 5:1).

The truth is, He isn't strange at all. He has just seemed strange to us because instead of living on His level like we were created to do, mankind has slipped down into the natural realm in his thinking.

When you're living at that low level, everything about God baffles you.

Some folks say, "Yes, amen, but you know that's the way the Bible says it will be. After all, God's ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts."

Yes, it does, and if that's all it said, we could never hope to be anything except stupid. But, praise God, the Bible doesn't stop there. If you'll go ahead and read the rest of Isaiah 55, you'll find God also said:

As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (verses 10-11).

In other words, you don't have to stay below God's thoughts. Your thoughts can come up to His level. How? Through His Word. God's thoughts are in His Word, so if you think His Word, you'll think His thoughts.

But wait a minute. To think God's supernatural thoughts, you'd have to have a "supernatural mind" wouldn't you?

Yes—and if you're a believer, you already have one. First Corinthians 2:16 says it this way, *"...we have the mind of Christ."* I read that for years but I didn't really understand it until I translated the word *Christ.* It means "the Anointed One."

So, to have the mind of Christ is to have a mind that is under the influence of the anointing of God.

A mind that's not under the influence of God is in opposition to Him. It always goes contrary to His ways. And since God's ways are right, then a mind without the anointing will think wrong.

Twisted or Transformed?

That's why Isaiah 55:7 says, *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts."* The word wicked there actually means twisted.

Satan takes God's thoughts and twists them.

He takes the truth and turns it into a lie. Thus, people who don't have the anointing of God on their minds have twisted thinking. They are thinking Satan's thoughts.

They don't realize that, of course. They think they're thinking their own thoughts. But in reality, they don't have that option.

You see, as members of the race of man, you and I are not independent entities. We are spirit and we are created in God's class or image, but we are not sovereign. We are not God.

Each one of us has a spiritual Lord. If we choose Jesus, He is our Lord. Those

who don't choose Jesus have the devil as their Lord by default whether they acknowledge it or not.

Since we are not independent entities, we cannot have independent thoughts. We will either be thinking Satan's thoughts or God's thoughts.

The straight thoughts of God are truth and the twisted thoughts of the devil are lies and there is nothing in between.

But let me warn you. Just because you've made Jesus Lord doesn't mean you'll automatically think God's thoughts. You only begin thinking God's thoughts when you begin to fill your mind and heart with the Word of God and make yourself subject to His anointing.

Romans 12:2 calls that process "the renewing of your mind." It also says that process will transform you. Why does it have such a dramatic effect? Because when you change your mind, you change your choices—and that changes everything!

Immersed in the Word

I'll never forget when that transformation began in me. I had just begun to learn what the Word of God and faith can do. I was so hungry for it and so desperate to change my life that I completely immersed myself in it.

I kept teaching and preaching tapes going all the time. I'd get up in the morning and put on a tape while I was shaving. I'd carry the recorder to the table and listen while I ate breakfast. Then I'd haul it out to the car (that was back in the days of the big reel-to-reel recorders so "haul" is a fairly accurate term) and listen to it while I drove to school. When I got back home at night, I listened to the Word again until I fell asleep.

I was 30 years old at that time and I'd pretty much thought the same way all my life. A way that had maneuvered me into more messes than I could find any natural way out.

But after just a few days of constantly feeding on the Word, I began to notice a change. My mind started working differently. I found myself comparing

everything I heard, whether it came out of my mouth or someone else's, with the Word of God.

When I'd hear something that was out of line with the Word, it would be glaringly apparent to me. Somebody would ask me how I was feeling.

Instead of saying those old things I used to say..."Well, you know this old football injury has really been acting up lately. It's giving me this shooting pain right up my leg"...I would just explode with the Word of God.

I'd say, "What difference does it make how I feel? I am not moved by what I feel. I am not moved by what I see. I am moved by what I believe and I believe the Word of God!" I just jumped on people like a chicken on a bug. (I didn't know any better back then. Thank God, He's mellowed me some over the years.)

What was happening? The anointing, the influence of God and His Word, was on my mind.

It was teaching me things.

The Bible says if you'll meditate on the Word day and night, it will talk to you when you wake up in the morning and visit with you all day long.

That's exactly what it began to do with me all those years ago.

I'd make choices with ease that other people struggled over. The Word made it clear for me which route I should take. I didn't have to agonize or debate over what I should do, the Word working in me caused me to make the right choice.

A Supernatural Choice

One of the best examples I've ever seen of the Word determining someone's choice was in my dad's life. When I was just a teenager, he was called to testify in a lawsuit his company had brought against a man who had broken contract with them to begin his own company.

There was a great deal of money on the line and the man had already offered

my dad millions of dollars' worth of stock in his company if he would testify in his favor. All my dad had to give was a yes or no answer. If he said no, he walked out of the courtroom a multimillionaire. If he said yes, he walked out with his job intact and a pat on the back.

He didn't even have to think about it. He just walked in the courtroom, answered yes and ended the lawsuit.

Afterward, I said, "Dad, how could you say that and just walk away from all that money?"

He answered simply, "Because to say anything else would have been a lie."

My dad didn't experience any pressure in that situation. As far as he was concerned there was only one thing to do. His choice had been made by the Word of God long before he ever stepped into the courtroom. He'd already made a decision that lying was not in his lifestyle and his choice flowed out of that decision.

Somebody might say, "Boy, that would be a tough choice to make." No, it would be harder than tough, it would be supernatural.

You have to be living above this natural realm to turn down an "easy" multimillion dollars. But you can do it if the Word of God is abiding in you.

Notice I said "abiding." That's the term Jesus used when referring to His Word. He said, *"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"*

(John 15:7). The word *abide* means to live.

God's Words are living forces. Powerful forces that, if you allow them to take up residence in you, will produce holiness in your life.

To be holy is to be separated to God's use.

Therefore, if you'll allow your choices to be bathed in the anointing of God's Word, those choices will separate you from the destructive bent of this natural world and take you into the blessings of the SUPERnatural realm.

Just think how far-reaching the consequences of such a change would be. Your choices can affect an entire generation. You can make certain choices that can either damage or enrich lives all around you. What may not seem like a very important decision to you, may ultimately make vital differences in your own future and that of your family.

But God sees the whole picture. He knows what's around the corner that you can't see. So when you are walking in His choices, your life starts to fit. Things start working. All the pieces of the puzzle start coming together.

You can save yourself so much heartache and headache it isn't even funny, just by spending some quality time in God's presence and in His Word. If you'll let Him, He will help you with every choice you make.

No Natural Solutions

Yes, *every* choice. Such a thought would surprise most people. They have an idea that they'll bring God in on the major problems in their lives, but they can handle the other things fine without Him.

It's kind of a personal version of the government's "separation of Church and state"

theory. If you want to know how well that theory works, take a look at how the government is doing.

It can't pay its bills, can't control crime, can't keep its citizens healthy...you know the story.

The fact is, natural power can't keep things from going downhill. No matter how many natural choices you try, nothing works.

Here's the reason. What we call the "natural" world is really subnatural. It is far below what God originally created it to be.

When God created the earth, things were perfect. There was a water canopy that covered it and filtered out ultraviolet light among other things. The atmospheric pressure was greater, the oxygen level was higher. People lived

an average of 12 times longer (see Genesis 2:6, 7:10-11; 2 Peter 3:5-6; Genesis 5).

But the effect of sin on the earth eventually caused that canopy to explode and flood the earth.

Noah and his family were the only ones who survived.

The loss of that canopy dramatically damaged Earth's atmosphere. Add to that damage the sin and destruction Satan has wrought and you'll realize why you have a basic, fundamental need to choose the supernatural rather than the natural.

It's necessary to your well-being in every area of life!

You were born into an atmosphere that you weren't created to live in. You face situations you weren't created to handle. You constantly encounter problems to which there are no natural solutions.

To have abundant life on this death-bound planet, you'll have to live a SUPERnatural lifestyle by making SUPERnatural choices every day of your life!

If you'll do that, it won't matter that this world is constantly bringing forth new kinds of danger and destruction, you can live on the Word of God in health, strength and victory for 120 years if you want (Genesis 6:3).

Instead of talking about getting old, you can talk the 103rd Psalm. Every morning when you get in the shower, you can get the rag in one hand, the soap in the other and start talking the Word. Stand under the water and say, *"Praise God, He fills my mouth with good things so my youth is renewed like the eagle's!"*

Every time you do something like that, you're making a supernatural choice. A choice to live by the Word instead of die like the world.

Start now getting that Word into your heart.

Start now letting the force of it and the anointing upon it direct your choices

—big and small. Let God begin to lift you up to His way of thinking.

Then, when the storms of life come, you'll know what to do. Instead of just grabbing a bucket and starting to bail, faith will rise up within you and you'll say, "Look here, storm. Peace, be still."

It will work for you just like it would have worked for the disciples. After all, you have Jesus in your boat!

Prayer for Salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Heavenly Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, *"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Acts 2:21). I am calling on You. I pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and be Lord over my life, according to Romans 10:9-10— *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* I do that now. I confess that Jesus is Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead.

I am now reborn! I am a Christian—a child of Almighty God! I am saved! You also said in Your Word, *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"* (Luke 11:13). I'm also asking You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, rise up within me as I praise God. I fully expect to speak with other tongues as You give me utterance (Acts 2:4).

Begin to praise God for filling you with the Holy Spirit. Speak those words and syllables you receive—not in your own language, but the language given to you by the Holy Spirit. You have to use your own voice. God will not force you to speak. Worship and praise Him in your heavenly language—in other tongues.

Continue with the blessing God has given you and pray in tongues each day.

You are a born-again, Spirit-filled believer.

You'll never be the same!

Find a good Word of God preaching church, and become a part of a church family who will love and care for you as you love and care for them.

We need to be connected to each other. It increases our strength in God. It's God's plan for us.

About the Author

For more than 32 years, Kenneth Copeland has led countless believers on a journey to maturity in the principles of faith, love, healing, prosperity, redemption and righteousness. Through the *Believers Voice of Victory* broadcast—one of the top five Neilsen-rated inspirational programs—and BVOV Magazine, he has brought revelation knowledge on the truths of God's Word. He has taught Christians everywhere that they can conquer the problems and challenges life brings through faith in God's Word.

Learn more about Kenneth Copeland Ministries by visiting our website at:

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